

THE IDENTITY OF '*TRYPETA*' *NIGRICANS* WIEDEMANN  
(DIPTERA: TEPHRITIDAE: TEPHRITINAE)

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**Abstract**

*Trypeta nigricans* Wiedemann, described from an unknown locality, is confirmed as a species of *Metasphenisca* Hendel and the Indian species *Metasphenisca bifaria* (Munro) is placed as a new synonym of it.

**Introduction**

*Trypeta nigricans* Wiedemann was described from an unknown locality (Wiedemann 1830). Bezzi (1913) suggested it might belong in *Acidia* Robineau-Desvoidy or *Aciura* Robineau-Desvoidy. Hardy (1968) examined the types (in Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna [NHMV]), provisionally referred it to the genus *Metasphenisca* Hendel and suggested a possible Afrotropical origin. This was followed by Norrbom *et al.* (1999). *Metasphenisca* is an Afrotropical-Oriental genus currently included in the tephritine tribe Tephrellini (Hancock 1990).

Through the kindness of Peter Sehna (NHMV), I have examined photographs of the lectotype female. Although both wings are damaged, sufficient remains to leave no doubt that *T. nigricans* is the same species as *Metasphenisca bifaria* (Munro), described from southern India (Munro 1947) and only known from there.

***Metasphenisca nigricans* (Wiedemann)**

*Trypeta nigricans* Wiedemann, 1830: 509. (Unknown locality).

*Isoconia bifaria* Munro, 1947: 111. (Coimbatore, India). **Syn. n.**

*Metaspheniscus* ? *nigricans*: Hardy, 1968: 147.

*Metasphenisca bifaria*: Hancock, 1990: 45.

*Comments.* Since its original description, the name *Trypeta* [or *Metasphenisca*] *nigricans* appears to have been used only in a list of names (Bezzi 1913), a catalogue of types (Hardy 1968) and a catalogue of World names (Norrbom *et al.* 1999). No additional specimens have been referred to it and it was not mentioned in any recent regional study or catalogue for either the Indian (*e.g.* Kapoor 1993, Agarwal and Sueyoshi 2005) or Afrotropical (*e.g.* Cogan and Munro 1980, Hancock 1990, 1991) faunas, unlike the currently used name *M. bifaria*. However, the Rules of the *International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature* (ICZN 1999), regarding automatic departure from the Principle of Priority for unused names proposed prior to 1900, do not appear to be fully applicable, with insufficient usage of the name *M. bifaria*. Accordingly, *M. nigricans* (Wiedemann) is accepted here as the senior and valid name, with *M. bifaria* (Munro) placed as a new synonym.

The wing pattern of this species is distinctive (Munro 1947), particularly the size and orientation of the two elongate, posterior hyaline indentations. *Metasphenisca* species normally have 3 pairs of frontal setae but Hardy (1968) recorded 5 pairs in the types of *M. nigricans* and Munro (1947: fig. 12) showed 4 pairs in his illustration of the head of *M. bifaria*, suggesting that the number of frontal setae in this species is variable.

*Distribution.* Known only from southern India (Tamil Nadu).

*Host plant.* Pods of *Barleria* sp. (Acanthaceae) (Munro 1947).

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